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ABSTRACT

Schools consistently and directly touch the lives of many residents. This paper offers a summary of points on how schools can become a neighborhood locus for family-centered and comprehensive services, which will aid in the establishment of safe, disciplined, and drug- and alcohol-free schools and communities. Schools and educators should shift their efforts from fragmented, often inadequate supports and services, to collaborative and comprehensive strategies that emphasize development, opportunities, and prevention. Schools must be made safe and even though the role of pupil personnel services is not and should not be that of policing, they must nevertheless be prepared to meet young people's increasing needs for safety. Reviewed here is recent or pending legislation that encourages comprehensive strategies for serving children and families: the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994; Goals 2000; the Improving American Schools Act; the President's Directive on Gun Free Schools; the School to Work Opportunities Act; the Empowerment/Zone/ Enterprise Community Initiative; the Family Preservation and Support Program; Youthbuild; and Head Start. (RJM)

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A SUMMARY OF THE TALKING POINTS

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Let's give our children a future. Let us take away their guns and give them books. Let us overcome their despair and replace it with hope. Let us, by our example, teach them to obey the law, respect our neighbors, and cherish our values. Let us weave these sturdy threads into a new American community that can once more stand strong against the forces of despair and evil because everyone has a chance to walk into a better tomorrow.

President William Jefferson Clinton
State of the Union Address
January 25, 1994

*Please note that the following is <u>not</u> a summary of Carol Rasco's remarks at the American Psychological Association's conference but rather a summary of the notes from which she made her speech.

Schools are often the one institution in a community that consistently and directly touch the lives of a significant number of residents. Successful schools are those that respond to the child as part of a family and the family as part of a neighborhood and a community. In communities around the country, educational institutions are directly involved in neighborhood revitalization efforts by staying open in the afternoon, evenings and on weekends to allow students and community members to engage in recreational and learning activities, coordinating with other agencies to provide social and health services, opening their doors to parents and other community members for adult education programs, and forging partnerships with business to provide on-the-job training, paid apprenticeships and training in entrepreneurship skills.

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The security and attractiveness of a neighborhood depends largely on the quality of its educational institutions. If communities lack strong, vibrant and safe schools, those who can afford to move elsewhere will. And those who remain will not receive a high-quality education that will enable them to be productive citizens. Schools can be a neighborhood locus for family-centered and comprehensive services, which will aid in the establishment of safe, disciplined, and drug and alcohol-free schools and communities.

School success must become the goal of every system -- not just of the schools. Schools and communities around the country are exploring new possibilities to enhance the much needed nonacademic components necessary to help all children reach high standards. In the end there is no substitute for ensuring that all of our schools are places that are safe, where teachers and others listen well to children, and there is effective help for young people to make a successful transition to the labor market or to postsecondary education.

Effective support for children and families requires changes in philosophy and focus. Schools and educators should shift their efforts as much as possible from fragmented, piecemeal, and often inadequate supports and services to comprehensive strategies that emphasize development, opportunities, and prevention. Collaboration among school professionals, families and the community is essential.

If children are to succeed at school, there must be a supportive structure that nurtures and encourages that

success. Too many of our children are terrified to go to school, especially as they get to middle school and find gang pressures from older children, so that the threat of violence with the school becomes even more worrisome than the dangers that confront children on their way to and from school.

In a recent survey, 37 percent of teens said they did not feel safe in school, and 50 percent said they knew someone who transferred to another school because of safety concerns. The role of pupil personnel services is not and should not be that of police person. However, it is no coincidence that schools that have more adults in the building who are willing and interested in listening to young people and meeting their individual needs are schools that are safer.

Cognitive, social, physical, emotional and moral development are all greatly impacted by the school environment. A 1989 Carnegie report on the education of young adolescents outlined goals of healthy adolescent development. While schools cannot and should not be expected to do everything, they do play a significant role in the development of children and adolescents. Pupil personnel services are a critical element to a school's ability to meet the ever increasing needs of young people. Ironically, just as what was required to be a productive adult is becoming more demanding, the ability of the family and the community to help children succeed at school and to become productive adults is eroding. The objective is not to take responsibility away from the families but, indeed, to enhance a young person's ability to be successful.

The Clinton Administration is well aware that policies and programs affecting children and their families must support and encourage the cooperation of existing organizations such as schools and community organizations. Several major pieces of recent or pending legislation present tremendous opportunities and challenges for schools and communities as they devise comprehensive strategies to serve children and families. Newly enacted or implemented legislation includes:

- **The Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994** represents one of the most comprehensive attacks on youth crime to date. To make sure that pupil service providers aren't the ones enforcing our laws, the bill includes tough -- but necessary -- enforcement provisions: the ability to try some hard-core criminal youth as adults, boot camps and other innovative sentencing options, and more police to enforce the laws and work with at-risk youth. But the bill also contains significant funding to prevent crime and violence in the first place. The Ounce of Prevention Council, with $1.5 million available for 1995, will coordinate new and existing crime prevention programs, including many oriented toward youth; $88.5 million will be available for competitive grants between 1996 and 2000. The Community Schools provision, administered by the Department of Health and Human Services, will provide funding for supervised after-school, weekend, and summer programs. This provision

will receive $37 million in 1995 and $530 million for 1996 through 2000. The Family and Communities Endeavor Schools (FACES) program, administered by the Department of Education, will provide $243 million in funding for in-school and after-school activities.

- **Goals 2000: Educate America Act** -- the centerpiece of President Clinton's education agenda -- recognizes and supports the need for a more comprehensive approach by providing resources to states and communities to develop and implement comprehensive education reforms aimed at helping all students reach challenging academic and occupational-skill standards. The law -- which addresses school readiness, school completion, competency in challenging subject matters, science and mathematics achievement, literacy, safe, disciplined, and drug-free schools, and parental participation -- asks state and local education agencies (LEAs) to create broad-based planning groups that include educators, parents, business leaders, representatives of health agencies, social service agencies, and community organizations that work with children and youth.

- **The Improving American Schools Act** (Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary School Act) strongly encourages states and LEAs to coordinate services. The priority of this legislation is high standards for all children, with the different elements needed for a

high-quality education well-aligned so that the education process works smoothly to help all students reach those standards. It requires LEAs to identify in their Title I plans (distributed on a formula basis) exactly how they will coordinate education, health, and social services. The Improving American Schools Act also supports comprehensive strategies that include drug prevention curricula and programs linking schools and communities.

- **The President's Directive on Gun Free Schools** ensures that States will enact "zero tolerance" policies that prohibit kids from bringing guns to schools. And to make this policy real, the President has also ordered the U. S. Attorneys to work with the Department of Education to develop strategies for enforcing the juvenile handgun ban (included in the crime bill) and the zero tolerance adopted by schools.

- **The School to Work Opportunities Act**, jointly administered by the Departments of Education and Labor and signed into law in May 1994, provides seed money for states and districts to develop programs that integrate challenging standards and workplace skills so that students graduate from high school with the knowledge and skills they need to enter their chosen professions or [to] continue their educations. These opportunities can enable this group -- 70 percent of American youth -- to find employment with career

potential.

- **The Empowerment Zone/Enterprise Community Initiative**, administered by the Departments of Housing and Urban Development and Agriculture, is one of the Clinton Administration's most ambitious projects to promote community development and provide jobs and economic opportunities. Through this initiative, the federal government offers to create compacts with communities and state and local governments. More than 800 communities have submitted applications under this initiative: each application contains a comprehensive and strategic plan for change, with performance-based benchmarks. By participating in this initiative, community residents, schools, businesses, financial institutions, service providers, neighborhood associations, and state and local governments can form or strengthen partnerships to support revitalization.
- **The Family Preservation and Support Program**, authorized as part of the 1993 budget agreement, includes almost $1 billion over five years for states to improve the well-being of vulnerable children and their families, particularly those experiencing or at risk of [experiencing] abuse and neglect. Because the multiple needs of these children and families cannot be addressed adequately through categorical programs and fragmented service delivery systems, states are encouraged to use the new program as a catalyst for

establishing a continuum of coordinated, integrated, culturally relevant, and family focused services. Services range from preventive efforts to strengthen families by providing crucial support to services for families in serious crisis or at risk of having children removed from the home.

- **Youthbuild**, administered by the Department of Housing and Urban Development, was authorized as "Youthbuild (Hope for Youth)" under the Housing and Community Development Act of 1992. With $40 million available for program implementation and development in [the] fiscal year 1993, Youthbuild's goal is to provide economically disadvantaged youth with education, employment, and leadership skills through opportunities for meaningful work with their communities. Training includes on-site construction work and off-site academic and job skills development.
- **Head Start**, administered by the Department of Health and Human Services, has an impact on child development and day care services, the expansion of state and local activities for children, the range and quality of services for young children and their families, and the design of training for staff involved in such programs. Head Start has served more than 13.8 million children and their families since 1965; grants are awarded to local public or private non-profit agencies.